

No. XV.—EASTERN SOLITARY SNIPE SHOT AT NALBAN ISLAND,
CHILKA LAKE, ON THE 16TH DECEMBER 1921.

While out duck shooting with Mr. T. McDonnell of 9, Theatre Road, Calcutta, at Chilka (Nalban Island), I flushed and killed a Solitary Snipe. As duck were fairly plentiful and fighting well at the time we did not trouble to fire at snipe. These were very plentiful and were being flushed almost every time we moved. This particular snipe however first attracted my attention by its loud cry. Then, noticing its large size, I shot it. (No. 5 shot, Smokeless Diamond).

Mr. McDonnell identified it as *G. solitaria* and informed me that Mr. James Smythe of Calcutta had flushed several in the same locality in X'mas, 1920.

We spent 3 days on the Chilka Lake and although we flushed and killed numerous Fantails and Pintails we saw no more Solitary Snipe.

Unfortunately I did not skin and preserve my specimen as I then did not realise that it was so rare on the Chilka. I guess it weighed between 6 and 7 ounces. There were 18 tail feathers. Legs were olive green.

I have no doubt that Mr. McDonnell's identification was correct.

H. B. TILDEN.

CARLTON HOTEL,
BOMBAY, 9th May 1922.

No. XVI.—IS THE DHAYAL (*COPSYCHUS SAULARIS*) A MIMIC ?

Legge says of *Copsychus saularis*, "Its power of imitation is considerable, tempting it to mock the voice of fowls and other birds in the vicinity of its domicile" (*Birds of Ceylon*, p. 435). To illustrate this habit of mimicry in the Magpie-Robin, he has quoted an anecdote related by Layard. The latter's observation is that even in freedom the Dhayal can mock to perfection the voices of other creatures. If this observation be true, the birds' behaviour appears quite singular, for even the parrots, which are past-masters in the art of mimicry, do not exhibit their apish propensity in their wild life.

It is very strange, however, that all the writers on Indian birds are silent on the Dhayal's power of mimicry. We find nothing about it in the works of Frank Finn, Jerdon, Eha, Dewar, and Dalgliesh. Even the *Fauna of British India* does not touch the point. On the other hand, Gould, in the *Birds of Asia*, Vol. III, states positively that this bird is not "degraded by apish tricks of imitation." My own aviary has harboured Dhayals for a long time, but no effort on their part to mimic the voices of their mess-mates has come to my view. I am anxious to know if any of the readers of this Journal has any experience of the above trait in the character of the Dhayal. Information on this point through the medium of this Journal would certainly add to our knowledge about the behaviour of the bird.

SATYA CHURN LAW.

No. XVII.—DESCRIPTION OF CHICK OF THE BENGAL FLORICAN
(*SYMPHEOTIS BENGALENSIS*).

In a notice on Mr. Stuart Baker's game birds, published in the April number of the *Ibis*, there is the following remark:—"Of the remaining Bustards, more especially the Bengal Florican, *Sympheotis bengalensis*, complete accounts have been given and we are surprised to find that apparently the chick of that species does not appear to be known."

I am very certain that I sent Mr. Stuart Baker, when at Dacca, a series of Bengal Florican skins, including that of a chick, which I had acquired; but as he

has not described it and, from the above notice, it presumably being undescribed, I do so now.

Description.—Above and below warm rufous buff. Crown rufous mixed with rufescent brown and bordered by a stripe of the same colour from each side, meeting behind at the nape and continuing partly down the back of the neck; ear-coverts bordered with rufescent brown; back and wings mixed rufous buff and rufescent brown; a patch of rufous bordered by rufescent brown from lower neck to breast and a patch of rufescent brown on each side of the breast; thighs with three broad rufescent brown bands on outer sides.

“Irides hazel brown” (A. M. Primrose). This was collected by Mr. A. M. Primrose in Goalpara on the 12th June 1916.

BAGHOWNIE LAHERIA SARAI,
BIHAR,
9th June 1922.

CHAS. M. INGLIS, M.B.O.U., F.Z.S., F.E.S.

No. XVIII.—OCCURRENCE OF THE BLACK THROATED DIVER
(*COLYMBUS ARCTICUS*) IN INDIA.

It is worth recording the fact that on February 19th, 1922, I shot a specimen of the above species on the Western Jumna Canal at Jagadhri, Ambala District, Punjab.

Soon after daybreak on this date I had gone up the left bank of the canal after some Pintail duck which I had seen alighting in the shallows some half mile above the railway bridge. I may mention that the canal here partakes more the character of a river inasmuch as the banks on either side are very irregular and on this particular day the water was very high, having in places inundated some extent of the adjacent low ground which usually is simply rush-covered mud, the haunts of *Prinia flaviventris*, *Cyanecula suecica* and *Centropus sinensis*. I mention these details because the Pintail usually do not settle on the canal proper, but finding this inundated patch suitable as a resting or feeding place they had congregated there in some numbers, and had it not been for this fact I should have gone in the opposite direction.

Having dealt with the duck, I was returning to the bridge when I saw this bird fishing near the bank. Waiting for it to dive I ran up and just before it reached the surface I could see the small fry leaping clear of the water before it's approach. As soon as it appeared clear on the surface I shot it.

Mr. Hugh Whistler, who kindly examined the specimen for me, in confirming my identification, tells me this is the first occurrence in India, adding that it is also the most southerly record, at the same time he adds in epist:—It apparently belongs to the race *Colymbus arcticus suschkini* (Sarudny), which according to Sarudny is found in Mongolia (Kobdo), Tomsk, the provinces of Ufa and Orenburg, the Kirshis Steppes and Western Siberia to the Yenissai.

Dissection proved it to be a female and Mr. Whistler is of opinion that it is a first winter bird.

There was very little fat on the specimen.

Colours of soft parts:—Irides red brown; bill livid grey, culmen dark brown; tarsi and feet dark leaden on upper surface, remainder livid grey.

Measurements :—

Wing	290 mm.
Tarsus	73 "
Bill from gape	83 "
Do. from skull	79 "
Do. from posterior margin of nostril	51 "
Do. depth at commencement of feathering	17 "

SIMLA,
20th April 1922.

A. E. JONES.